

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

PREVIEW

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Los Angeles

The Relationship of Ethnic Identity  
to  
Self-Esteem and Stress  
as a function of  
Perceived Discrimination  
among  
Mexican-Americans

A dissertation submitted in partial  
satisfaction of the requirements for the  
degree Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

by

Rodolfo Basurto Jr.

UMI Number: 9625501

Copyright 1995 by  
Basurto, Rodolfo, Jr.

All rights reserved.

---

UMI Microform 9625501  
Copyright 1996, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized  
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

---

**UMI**  
300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

PREVIEW

Copyright by  
Rodolfo Basurto Jr.  
1995

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY  
LOS ANGELES CAMPUS

This dissertation of Rodolfo Basurto Jr.,  
directed and approved by the candidate's  
Committee, has been accepted by the  
Faculty of the California School of  
Professional Psychology in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 6, 1995  
DATE

Dissertation Committee:

Esteban Olmedo, Ph.D.  
Esteban Olmedo, Ph.D., Chairperson

Raymond Buriel  
Raymond Buriel, Ph.D.

Rigoverto C. Briceno, Ph.D.  
Rigoverto Briceno, Ph.D.

1995

ii

## DEDICATION

To my mother for guiding me to the door of love,  
forgiveness, and dignity and to my father for giving me the  
key to determination, honesty, and generosity and to God for  
giving me the strength to walk beyond my highest  
aspirations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables . . . . .	vi
List of Appendices . . . . .	vii
Acknowledgements . . . . .	viii
Vita . . . . .	x
Abstract of the Dissertation . . . . .	xi
 CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION . . . . .	 1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	6
 CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW . . . . .	 10
Self-Esteem . . . . .	10
Ethnic Minority Self-Esteem and Discrimination . . . . .	12
The Assumption of Awareness . . . . .	13
The Assumption of Agreement . . . . .	14
The Assumption of Personal Relevance . . . . .	15
The Assumption of Significance . . . . .	16
Ethnic Identity . . . . .	17
Models of Identity Development . . . . .	20
Cross's Model of Black Identity Development . . . . .	20
Marcia's Model of Identity Development . . . . .	21
Phinney's Model of Ethnic Identity Development . . . . .	22
Psychological Correlates of Phinney's Ethnic Identity Model . . . . .	23
Diffusion/Foreclosure Stage . . . . .	23
Encounter Stage . . . . .	23
Ethnic Identity Search/Moratorium . . . . .	24
Ethnic Identity Achievement . . . . .	24
The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure . . . . .	25
Stress . . . . .	26
Summary . . . . .	31
Definition of Terms and Hypotheses . . . . .	34
 CHAPTER III METHODS . . . . .	 38
Subjects . . . . .	38
Design . . . . .	39
Procedures . . . . .	40
Instrumentation . . . . .	42
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory . . . . .	42
Hispanic Stress Inventory . . . . .	43
Perceived Discrimination Survey . . . . .	44
Background Questionnaire . . . . .	46
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure . . . . .	46
 CHAPTER IV RESULTS . . . . .	 48
Initial Analysis . . . . .	49
Demographic . . . . .	50
Convergent Validity of the Perceived Discrimination Instruments . . . . .	59



## Table of Contents

	Analyses of Perceived Discrimination Items for the Low and High Group . . . . .	59
	Analysis of Research Hypotheses . . . . .	64
	Relationship Between Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem for High Perceived Discrimination Group . . . . .	65
	Relationship Between Ethnic Identity and Stress for High Perceived Discrimination Group . . . . .	66
	Analyses of Differences Between Ethnic Identity and Stress Correlation Coefficients . . . . .	67
	Analyses of Differences Between Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem Correlation Coefficients for High and Low Groups. . . . .	69
	Analyses of Differences Between Ethnic Identity and Stress Correlation Coefficients for High and Low Groups . . . . .	70
	Post-hoc Analyses . . . . .	72
	Summary of Results . . . . .	74
CHAPTER V	DISCUSSION . . . . .	77
	Perceived Discrimination . . . . .	77
	Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem . . . . .	78
	Ethnic Identity and Stress . . . . .	85
	Limitations . . . . .	93
	Practical Implications . . . . .	95
	Future Research . . . . .	98
	REFERENCES . . . . .	99
	APPENDIX A-F . . . . .	105

## List of Tables

Table 1:	Demographic Profile of the Total Sample . . . .	51
Table 2:	Demographic Comparison of High and Low Perceived Discrimination Group . . . . .	55
Table 3:	Perceived Discrimination Means for High and Low Groups . . . . .	61
Table 4:	Correlation between Ethnic Identity and Stress for High Perceived Discrimination Group . . . . .	68

## List of Appendices

Appendix A - Consent Form . . . . .	105
Appendix B - Background Survey . . . . .	107
Appendix C - Perceived Discrimination Survey-Padilla . .	109
Appendix D - Perceived Discrimination Survey-Korzenny. .	111
Appendix E - Hispanic Stress Inventory . . . . .	113
Appendix F - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory . . . . .	115
Appendix G - Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure . . . . .	117

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my mother, Sylvia, my father, Rodolfo and my grandparents for providing me with love and support throughout my educational experience. The sacrifices and words will never be forgotten. To my sisters Cynthia, Patricia, Leann, and Donna for teaching me how to be a brother and for tolerating my enthusiasm for the truth. I would like to thank my friends Dan, Joseph, Craig, Tom, Perry and Debbie who over the years have become family and have provided much encouragement. To Sylvia, a special friend, who has been a blessing throughout my greatest challenge. The motivation and peacefulness you provided was deeply inspirational.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and guidance Dr. Esteban Olmedo has provided me as my dissertation chair. Dr. Olmedo has been an ideal Latino professional mentor, being a role model as a researcher, teacher, and man. The endless support and encouragement that you provided has allowed me to transcend into higher levels of self-understanding.

I would like to acknowledge my committee members Dr. Raymond Buriel and Dr. Rigoverto Briceno for providing me with thoughtful feedback and enlightening discussions. Your care for the community is greatly respected. A special thanks to Dr. Richard Cervantes for acting as mentor early

on in my professional development. Finally, I would like to thank the Latino clubs, students, sponsors, teachers and administrators at Citrus College, Rio Hondo College, and Devry Institute for allowing me to understand their struggles at a deeper level.

## Vita

- October 25, 1968 - Born El Paso, Texas
- May 1991 - B.A. Creighton University
- 6/92-7/92 - Counselor, Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- 6/92-7/93 - Research Assistant, USC School Of Medicine
- 8/92-5/93 - Counselor, Children, Youth, & Family Services
- 9/92-5/93 - Testing Clerk, Community Counseling Services-Amanecer, Los Angeles
- 8/93-8/94 - Field Placement Student, Catholic Psychological Services, Pico Rivera
- May 1994 - M.A., California School of Professional Psychology: Los Angeles
- 9/94-4/96 - Child Care Worker, McKinnely Home for Boys/San Dimas
- 9/94-6/95 - Psychological Intern, Kaiser Permanente, Montclair
- 9/94-1/95 - Teaching Assistant, Multivariate Statistics
- 9/95-Present - APA Psychological Intern, The H.E.L.P. Group, Sherman Oaks

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Cervantes, R.C., & Basurto, R. (1992). Latino Immigration: Acculturation and Other Adaptional Demands, invited symposium presentation at the 100th annual convention of the American Psychological Association Washington, D.C.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Relationship of Ethnic Identity

to

Self-Esteem and Stress

as a function of

Perceived Discrimination

among

Mexican-Americans

Rodolfo Basurto Jr.

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles

1995

Esteban Olmedo, Ph.D., Chairperson

This study examined the relationship of ethnic identity to self-esteem and various cultural specific stressors as a function of perceived discrimination among adult Mexican-Americans. More specifically, it was hypothesized that for those subjects perceiving high levels of discrimination, ethnic identity could be used as an anchor point in facilitating self-esteem and decreasing marital, family/cultural, and occupational stress.

A sample of 99 Mexican-American adults were surveyed in various community colleges. Utilizing two questionnaires on perceived discrimination subjects were divided into a high or low perceived discrimination group. A total of five

hypotheses were tested comparing within and between group relationships between ethnic identity as measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure and self-esteem as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory, and between ethnic identity and stress as measured by the Hispanic Stress Inventory.

Results indicated that the majority of subjects frequently perceive discrimination at work, schools, restaurants, government offices, and by police. Four out of the five hypotheses were found to be at least partially supported. Statistically significant relationships for the high group were found between ethnic identity and self-esteem ( $r = .37$ ,  $p = .004$ ), and ethnic identity and marital stress ( $r = -.29$ ,  $p = .02$ ). These relationships were significantly stronger when compared to the low group. Additionally, a strong relationship was found between ethnic identity and cultural/family stress for both groups.

As hypothesized, those subjects in the high perceived discrimination group obtained high self-esteem and low marital and family stress scores when accompanied by an established ethnic identity. When faced with discrimination, subjects in the high group tended to use these experiences as facilitating their identity and self-esteem. However, those subjects in the lower stages of ethnic identity development were more likely to be having difficulty coping with an emotionally laden process. Future



research should attempt to delineate strategies to cope with perceived discrimination among married couples and families with members holding varying degrees of ethnic identity.

PREVIEW

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Mexican-Americans have long been victims of discrimination. In 1920, M.C. Gonzalez, founder of League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), documented the different ways Mexicans-Americans in Los Angeles were being discriminated against, including; a) segregation in schools and public facilities; b) the use of housing covenants to ban them from buying homes in white neighborhoods; c) the prohibition from serving on juries. Around this time similar accounts of discrimination were experienced in other parts of the country (Shorris, 1992).

In a small housing development in El Paso, Texas called "Segundo Barrio" tenants lived without sanitary facilities and often shared one toilet for an entire building. City officials finally began enforcing housing codes in this area in the late 1980s. Studies documented overcrowding and lack of funds in San Antonio schools. Having no furniture, children ate off the cafeteria floor. In one school the cafeteria seated 120 of its 1,700 students (Shorris, 1992).

The deleterious effects of racism can now be seen in looking at employment and educational rates. Hispanics have significantly higher rates of unemployment than white non-Hispanics, and Hispanic males have a 45.7% dropout rate from high school (Knouse, Rosenfeld, & Cubertson, 1992). Schick

and Schick (1991) found that only 6% of Mexican-Americans 25 years old and older complete four years of college.

Interestingly, language usage has been tied to one's sense of identity (Berry, 1980; Keefe & Padilla, 1987). Mexican-Americans have been noted to speak Spanish and/or English. Various studies on acculturation depict an overwhelming diversity of language capabilities within the Mexican-American community (Berry, 1980; Keefe, et al., 1987). The exact effects of discrimination on the psychological well-being of Mexican-Americans have yet to be studied (Arbona, in press). Much of the research regarding the mental health of Mexican-Americans has been devoted to studying the process of acculturation.

Acculturation over the years has been related to a person's mental health status, somatic complaints, levels of social support, deviancy, alcoholism, drug use, risk of coronary heart disease, suicide and political attitudes (Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, 1987; Griffith, 1983; Levine & Padilla, 1980; Berry & Annis, 1974,; Ramirez, 1969). Despite these apparent correlations, little is known about the affective component or intrapsychic nature of the acculturating individual perhaps because most measurements of acculturation are behaviorally based (Mendoza, 1989; Burnanm, Karno, & Hough, 1987; Marin et al., 1987).

Keefe & Padilla (1987) attempted to address this issue by studying cultural orientation in terms of two distinct yet related domains. One domain was identified as "Cultural

Awareness" (CA) and the second domain was termed "Ethnic Loyalty" (EL). "Cultural Awareness", as referred to earlier, measures behaviorally one's knowledge of cultural customs, traditions, and language. These items are typical forms of measurement of the acculturation process (Berry, 1980). "Ethnic Loyalty" , on the other hand, measures a person's preference for one's cultural orientation or ethnic group and corresponds to ethnic identity. This factor reflects two lower order factors; Perceived Discrimination (PD) and Ethnic Pride and Affiliation (EPA).

Interestingly, studies have shown that the mean level of Mexican Cultural Awareness (CA) decreased substantially from the first generation to the second generation and continued to decline gradually through later generations. However, EL showed only a small decrease from the first to the second generation and remained at the same level up to the fourth generation (Keefe & Padilla, 1987, Arbona, in press). Discrimination was subjectively experienced across generational levels. This is a significant finding since perceived discrimination has now been tied to ethnic identity (Keefe et al., 1987).

Empirical data are lacking regarding the relationship between perceived discrimination, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and stress. Most research on discrimination, study those that hold prejudices against other people (Bar-Tal, Graumana, Kruglanski, Stroebe, 1989). Some studies have looked at the effects of perceived discrimination in the

workplace (Etheridge, 1982; Bhatnagar, 1991; Dorr, 1992) but little is still known as to how perceived discrimination affects the Mexican-American's self-esteem and stress (Arbona, in press).

Since perceived discrimination is related to ethnic identity it is important to study self-esteem in relation to identity development (Keefe et al., 1987). The process of ethnic identity focuses on how the individual relates to oneself and to his/her own ethnic group as a subgroup of the larger society (Phinney, 1990). A complex positive correlation was found between self-esteem and ethnic identity (Phinnney, 1991). This correlation was found only when the people being studied held a positive view of the mainstream society. Most Mexican-Americans subjectively experience discrimination; however, little is known on how this experience relates to self-esteem.

Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder (1991) considered one's subjective experience of discrimination as a potential psychosocial stressor. Other culturally relevant stressors cited by Cervantes et al. (1991) were related to changing personal and familial values, changing role expectations, linguistic differences, and lowered socioeconomic status. Although, empirical data are lacking on the above cultural stressors (Cervantes & Castro, 1985) more recent research shows relationships to psychosocial behavior (Olona, 1993). Research is needed to understand more fully the relationship between culturally relevant

stressors and self-esteem (Phinney, 1991).

PREVIEW

### Statement of the Problem

Most research on perceived discrimination has focused on those that hold prejudices (Bar-Tal et al., 1989) not on the subjective experience of the alleged victim (Arbona, in press). Studies indicate that many Mexican-Americans experience discrimination (Keefe et al., 1987; Arbona, in press) particularly, at work and school (Korzenny & Schiff, 1987). The implications of experiencing discrimination in the workplace (Knouse et al., 1992) and educational settings (Shorris, 1992) are far reaching for Mexican-Americans.

A long time controversy surrounds the effects of discrimination on self-esteem among minority populations. Erik Erikson's (1966) thoughts exemplified one side of the controversy:

The individual belonging to an oppressed and exploited minority, which is aware of the dominant cultural ideas but prevented from emulating them, is apt to fuse the negative images held up to him by the dominant majority with his own negative identity (p. 155).

Erikson believed that minorities lacked self-esteem because they compared themselves negatively towards the mainstream society. This assumption was substantially disproved by the proponents of self-esteem and cross cultural studies (Carter, 1968, Rosenberg, 1979, Padilla & Ruiz, 1973, Jensen, White, & Galliher, 1982, and Simpson & Yinger,

1985). The above authors showed that Blacks and Hispanics do not necessarily suffer from low self-esteem. At times they found these groups to have higher levels of self-esteem than White Non-Hispanics. Methodology accounted for some of the contradictory findings. However, the underlying assumption that minorities compare themselves to the mainstream had less support. Most of the studies measured lower socioeconomic status children and adolescents, as groups, and seemed to be fueled by the Chicano movement. The current research on discrimination and self-esteem among Mexican-American adults is scarce (Arbona, in press) and is partly the focus of this study.

More recent research has focused on the relationship between self-esteem and stress among Mexicans (Salgado de Snyder, 1987; Krause, Bennett, & Tran, 1989; Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1985) and for the general population (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) and not on perceived discrimination. Most of the above studies contend that stress is negatively correlated with self-esteem.

Pearlin and Schooler (1978) purport that individuals become vulnerable to low self-esteem because of their inability to alter stressful conditions. It is important to consider cultural arrangements when differentiating stressful conditions (Mirowsky & Ross, 1980). For example, a Mexican immigrant's self-esteem may be affected in an English speaking occupation while, an African American's goes unaffected.